

GORD and IndoUSrare Announce 2026 Abbey Meyers Khushi Bridging RARE Award Honorees

IndoUSrare & GORD announce 2026 Abbey Meyers Khushi Bridging RARE Award honorees! Join us Nov. 1, Manassas, VA for an inspiring Gala
#BridgingRARE #RareDisease

HERNDON, VA, UNITED STATES, October 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Indo US Organization for Rare Diseases \(IndoUSrare\)](https://www.indousrare.org/), a 501(c)(3) humanitarian organization in the USA, and Global Organisation for Rare Diseases (GORD) Foundation, a Section 8 not-for-profit company in India, today announced the recipients of the [2026 Abbey Meyers Khushi Bridging RARE Awards](#): biopharma innovator Dr. Anish Bhatnagar, patient advocate and community leader Dr. Sumathi Iyengar, and population genetics pioneer Dr. Kumarasamy Thangaraj.

The honorees will be celebrated during the Bridging RARE Gala 2026 on Sunday, November 1, 2026, at the Hylton Performing Arts Center in Manassas, Virginia. The annual Gala brings together patients, advocates, researchers, clinicians, industry leaders, policymakers, and philanthropists. Named after rare disease advocacy pioneer Abbey Meyers, Founder and President Emeritus of the National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD), and Khushi, representing hope and resilience, the award honors leaders who build bridges between science, policy, and global patient communities.

"This year's honorees prove that geography and traditional silos must never stand in the way of patient-centered innovation," said Harsha K. Rajasimha, PhD, Founder and Executive Chairman of IndoUSrare, GORD, and Jeeva Clinical Trials Inc. "Their achievements embody the heart of



GORD and IndoUSrare Announce 2026 Abbey Meyers Khushi Bridging RARE Award Honorees - biopharma innovator Dr. Anish Bhatnagar, patient advocate and community leader Dr. Sumathi Iyengar, and population genetics pioneer Dr. Kumarasamy Thangaraj.

'Bridging RARE'—connecting scientific discovery with patient purpose."

Dr. Anish Bhatnagar is being recognized for his leadership in orphan drug development, his commitment to the Prader-Willi syndrome community, and his efforts to advance therapies for underserved rare disease populations. He led the team at Soleno Therapeutics developing the first-ever FDA-approved treatment for PWS, Vykat XR. His passion for delivering meaningful solutions for those impacted by rare diseases has been recognized with TIME Magazine naming him one of the 100 Most Influential People in Health for 2025, and his invited testimony to the United States Senate's Special Committee on Aging, where he testified on "Unlocking Hope: Access to Therapies for People with Rare, Progressive and Serious Diseases." He was also awarded the "Champion of Hope" award from the Foundation of Prader Willi Research in 2025. His work exemplifies how cross-border biopharmaceutical collaboration can turn scientific promise into life-changing treatments.

"It is a tremendous honor to receive the Abbey Meyers Khushi Bridging RARE Award," said Dr. Bhatnagar. "Rare disease progress depends on collaboration among patients, families, researchers, regulators, and innovators. I am proud to stand alongside a community that continues to push the boundaries of what is possible for patients worldwide."

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*Dr. Harsha Rajasimha,
Founder and Executive Chair
of IndoUSrare and GORD*

Dr. Sumathi Iyengar is being recognized for her patient-centered leadership and sustained commitment to the Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome (WAS) community. After her son, Amalan, was diagnosed with WAS, she transformed her family's rare-disease journey into collective action—connecting patients and families, engaging physicians and researchers, and helping build the community that became the Wiskott-Aldrich Foundation. For more than a decade, her advocacy has helped strengthen the patient voice across research and

therapeutic development and build bridges among families, clinicians, researchers, regulators,

Community members are invited to be part of the Bid4RARE Silent Auction will feature donated items, experiences, and packages contributed by supporters of the rare disease community, with proceeds supporting IndoUSrare's programs and initiatives.

and therapy developers. Her journey exemplifies the spirit of Bridging RARE: transforming the experience of one family into a mission capable of advancing hope and progress for many.

"I am deeply honored to receive the Abbey Meyers Khushi Bridging RARE Award. My journey began as a mother searching for answers and hope for my son, and it taught me that rare disease progress happens when we build bridges—between patients and physicians, families and researchers, advocates and regulators, and across organizations and countries. I accept this recognition with tremendous gratitude on behalf of the extraordinary WAS community that has walked this journey together."

Dr. Kumarasamy Thangaraj, recipient of the Vigyan Shri (2025) and Padma Shri (2026), is recognized for over three decades of groundbreaking contributions to population genetics, mitochondrial science, and rare neuromuscular disorders. Dr. Thangaraj's work on endogamy and founder effects has advanced rare disease diagnosis, screening, and precision medicine. His leadership in major national and international initiatives, including the Society for Mitochondrial Research and Medicine, GenomeIndia, and the Paediatric Rare Genetic Disease mission, has helped advance genomic diagnosis in India and contributed to global genomic research initiatives.

"I am deeply honored to receive the Abbey Meyers Khushi Bridging RARE Award," said Dr. Thangaraj. "This recognition reflects the collective efforts of countless scientists, clinicians, patients, and families who have contributed to advancing genomic medicine. Connecting scientific discovery with real-world patient diagnoses requires collaboration across borders, and I remain committed to building partnerships that expand knowledge and improve lives."

The 2026 Bridging RARE Gala is expected to bring together more than 100 leaders from advocacy, academia, healthcare, biotechnology, government, and philanthropy.

□ Inspiring Keynotes & Recognition of Community Leaders

□ Dynamic Mentored Emcees: Hosted by healthcare entrepreneur Dr. Srilekha Reddy Palle, PT, DPT, MBA, alongside next-generation student leaders and IndoUSrare interns Vinay Kalva (Johns Hopkins University), Amulya Karur (Virginia Commonwealth University), and Samyukta Sreevatsa (Poolesville High School).

□ Dinner, cultural performances, and networking.



The poster for the Bridging RARE Gala 2026 features a dark blue background with gold accents. At the top, logos for IndoUSrare and GORD are displayed. The main title "BRIDGING RARE Gala 2026" is prominently featured in gold. Below the title, the tagline "AN EVENING OF PURPOSE. A LIFETIME OF IMPACT." is written. A list of ticket prices is provided: GRAND (\$20,000), GOLD (\$10,000), SILVER (\$5,000), BRONZE (\$2,000), and FRIEND of RARE (\$500). A QR code is included with the text "SCAN TO REGISTER". The event details are listed at the bottom: Sunday, November 1, 2026, 5:00 PM - 10:00 PM ET, at the Hylton Performing Arts Center in Manassas, Virginia. The poster also mentions that all proceeds support IndoUSrare's mission and initiatives.

Tickets for the Bridging RARE Gala are now available. Giving opportunities are available at the GRAND, GOLD, SILVER, or BRONZE Patron levels, or as a FRIEND of RARE

□ #Bid4Rare Silent Auction: The Bid4RARE Silent Auction will feature donated items, experiences, and packages contributed by supporters of the rare disease community, with proceeds supporting IndoUSrare's programs and initiatives. The Silent Auction is expected to open online in advance of the Gala and continue through the event evening.

Rare disease families, healthcare professionals, researchers, industry leaders, philanthropists, and community advocates are encouraged to register early to secure their attendance. For those wishing to deepen their impact and champion hope for the 300 million people worldwide living with a rare condition, giving opportunities are available at the GRAND, GOLD, SILVER, or BRONZE Patron levels, or as a FRIEND of RARE. We gratefully acknowledge Dr. Srinivas Kankanahalli and family for their generous donation.

Date & Time: Sunday, November 1, 2026 | 5:00 PM – 10:00 PM ET

Venue: Hylton Performing Arts Center, Manassas, Virginia (Black Tie / Formal Attire)

Tickets for the black-tie Gala are available now. Seating is limited, and early registration is encouraged. Proceeds from the Gala support IndoUSrare programs advancing research, awareness, patient engagement, and global collaboration for rare diseases.

□ To Register: Visit <https://www.indousrare.org/gala>

□ Sponsorship Inquiries: Email admin@indousrare.org

□ Direct Donations: Contributions can be made via Zelle (treasurer@indousrare.org), PayPal, or check to the Indo US Organization for Rare Diseases (TAX ID:

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